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PAKISTAN: ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT YAHYA KHAN SAYS HE WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO TALKS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF ISLAMABAD AND BANGLA DESH FOR THE PURPOSE OF SEEKING A POLITICAL RAPPROCHEMENT, SUCH NEGOTIATIONS REMAIN UNLIKELY AS LONG AS THERE IS NO PROSPECT FOR THE RELEASE OF EAST PAKISTANI LEADER MUJIBUR RAHMAN.

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[REDACTED]
AMBASSADOR FARLAND INFORMED YAHYA ON 24 AUGUST OF RECENT US CONTACTS IN CALCUTTA WITH AN AWAMI LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE WHO SAID THAT THE GROUP'S LEADERS ARE INTERESTED IN A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN. IN REPLY TO A "HYPOTHETICAL" SUGGESTION BY THE AMBASSADOR, YAHYA SAID THAT HE WOULD LOOK WITH FAVOR ON AN UNPUBLICIZED MEETING IN A "NEUTRAL" THIRD COUNTRY BETWEEN HIS REPRESENTATIVES AND A BANGLA DESH DELEGATION, SHOULD SUCH A POSSIBILITY DEVELOP.

YAHYA AND THE AMBASSADOR DID NOT DISCUSS THE STATUS OF MUJIBUR RAHMAN, WHO IS CURRENTLY ON TRIAL IN WEST PAKISTAN. ALTHOUGH YAHYA REPORTEDLY HAS DECIDED AGAINST EXECUTING THE EAST PAKISTANI LEADER, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT HE WOULD CONSIDER HALTING MUJIB'S TRIAL AND RELEASING HIM. THE AWAMI LEAGUERS, HOWEVER, HAVE CONSISTENTLY SAID THAT MUJIB WOULD HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN ANY FINAL SETTLEMENT, AND THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE RELUCTANT TO AGREE TO ANY TALKS WITHOUT PRIOR ASSURANCE THAT HIS RELEASE WOULD AT LEAST BE A SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION. [REDACTED]

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